Friends of the Hammock Annual Meeting — Raptor Encounter!
Monday, January 22, 2018, 7:00 PM • Elliott Room, Dunedin Community Center

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St. Petersburg’s Boyd Hill Nature Preserve will present a program featuring birds of prey that can be seen in Hammock Park. Featured will be several live native birds, including a red shouldered hawk, a great horned owl and a screech owl. Learn about the characteristics of raptors, aspects of their predatory-prey relationships, adaptations that ensure their success as predators, their role as an indicator species for the bioaccumulation of toxins and their very important role of maintaining healthy balanced ecosystems.

As an added feature, the presentation will include a special section on the rare-to-this-area short-tailed hawk. The Boyd Hill group will discuss their research from information gathered on one they banded in 2017.

Get pointers on identifying bird calls and discover apps that will help you in this endeavor. Join us for refreshments afterwards and a chance to meet these magnificent birds.

Get up-close and personal to the birds of prey that soar through Florida’s skies at the Annual Meeting of the Friends of the Hammock
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The Friends of the Hammock Board of Directors and the City’s Hammock Advisory Committee meet the second Monday each month at the Dunedin Community Center, 1920 Pinehurst Road in Room 106 at 6:30 PM.

All members and public are welcome. Friends of the Hammock of Dunedin, Inc. is an IRS-recognized nonprofit organization.
Irma’s Impact
Hammock Park reopened two months after Hurricane Irma hit with a vengeance.

On September 11, 2017, Hurricane Irma passed by Dunedin in the early morning hours and Hammock Park was seriously impacted. The park had to be closed because the paths were obstructed by trees and debris and because of the danger of overhead broken hanging limbs. Approximately 55 large trees were destroyed or severely damaged along the trails. The number of damaged and fallen trees deep in the woods has not been evaluated, according to Dunedin City Arborist Craig Wilson.

The massive cleanup effort was done by the park staff with the collaborative help of a FEMA contractor and auditor. Among the trees affected were 17 oaks, 7 cedars, 7 pines, 6 bay trees and 6 sugarberry trees. The disposition of the trees removed from the trails will be evaluated by the city. As a rule, fallen trees are allowed to remain in the woods as part of the natural ecology, but consideration will be given to other factors such as fire hazard. On a positive note, with many large trees lost, the canopy has opened up and will allow sunlight to penetrate the forest floor. This will accelerate the establishment of the next generation of plants and trees in the forest.

Fallen tree removal Damage at the Main Entrance More clean-up operations

City arborist Craig Wilson surveys a fallen oak on Kettle’s Trail

Trail Unveiling
The newest addition to the Hammock is the completed trail in land purchased from Our Lady of Lourdes Church last year.

City park employees have created a beautiful looping path through this highest land in the park. It traverses around the burrows of gopher tortoises whose habitat was saved by the property acquisition. At the Friends of the Hammock Annual Meeting in January, the name of the trail will be unveiled. As a hint to the name, Scottish treats will be given to those in attendance as a celebration of the trail’s official opening.

Founder’s Passing
Vivien Skinner Grant, civic leader and founding member of the Friends of the Hammock passed away on October 21, 2017 at the age of 104.

Vivien’s family were Dunedin pioneers, who once owned the property called Skinner’s Hammock that is now Hammock Park. She was a pillar of the Dunedin community, serving 5 terms as a Commissioner and receiving the Citizen of the Year, Lady Citizen of the Year, Delightful Dunedin and Senior Hall of Fame awards.

Vivien in 1942

She served on boards and committees well into her nineties. She once gave advice to a Hammock board member to “stop worrying about the condition of the Hammock and take more time to walk and enjoy it’s beauty.” Advice well taken from a great and beautiful lady who will be deeply missed.

In 2010, the Friends of the Hammock established the Butterfly Garden located at the main entrance to the park. Providing a valuable habitat for butterfly populations, the garden features a flowering display of butterfly favorites in 11 beds with 225 plants of 40 varieties.

Volunteer responsibilities are maintaining the plant beds and flower displays including planting and weeding, as well as sprinkler system maintenance. The schedule is flexible, and takes several hours per month, varying with the season.

This is a volunteer opportunity provided by the Friends of the Hammock in partnership with Dunedin Parks and Recreation. If interested please e-mail t.polgar@verizon.net with a letter of intent.

Call for Volunteers

The Astounding Air Potato Beetle!
The Florida Department of Agriculture made a request to the Friends of the Hammock to collect and send them air potatoes to provide food for their breeding program. They are having trouble finding the vines! In a one week extensive search of every trail and backwood sites in the Hammock, we were only able to collect a handful of the invasive “tater.” Only a tenth of the box they sent us was filled.

Three years ago, before introducing the beetle to the Hammock, we collected a DUMPSTER full of potatoes. The representative from the department told us this was a wonderful tribute to the effectiveness of this mighty little bug and that they were more than satisfied with an almost empty box!